food, seed, and chicken feed were met, 58 per cent of the crop remained to be sold off for cash (Janlekha 1955:53). Almost every inhabitant was engaged in commercial rice farming. A few teachers, craftsmen, and traders, alone did not farm. Plantings of early and late varieties in different plots spread the toil. Cooperative work or some local hired help assured adequate labor forces at the needed moment. Nevertheless, two heavy work seasons dominated the rice cycle. The first of these, June through August, involved soil preparation and transplanting of the seedlings in long straight rows. In the second season, November into February, the rice was harvested, brought home for threshing and winnowing, then sold or stored. The straw was stacked as buffalo feed. People were anxious during the preparatory and planting season, for rains were fickle and the planning and timing had to be exact. Work was hard and almost grim. Harvest, though perhaps more of a physical strain because people cut the stalks by day, then threshed and winnowed far into the night, was gay and so less taxing emotionally, for the crop had safely passed through the threats of flood, drought, and pest, and "cash was in sight." Haste was necessary because each plot of rice had to be harvested within three or four days of its maturity, and because at that season the canals were drying up rapidly, raising the possibility not only that human backs and not boats would move the crop, but that the buyers themselves could not get their boats in to take the main portion to the urban markets. Then a farmer might have to wait until the canals filled again in June to sell his rice and get his money. Since during the busy seasons everyone from age 18 on up was taken up with farming, the cooking, child care, and other chores were carried on by the aged and the very young. These work days taxed to the limit the strength of all men, women, and even young people. Ten to 18 hours might be spent stooping to transplant or weed, or, at harvest, to cut the rice stalk close to the ground. There was a great deal of heavy lifting of seedling bundles or sheaves. The few professional masseurs in the area said they were kept on the run because of back complaints especially during the periods of heavy labor.

In the periods between these two seasons, tools were repaired, houses rebuilt, and ceremonies organized. Extra cash was earned in various ways. People kept very busy, though they did allow themselves more sleep.

The importance of women's role in agriculture is indicated by their virtual equation with men. In every step of rice-production women worked alongside men, plowing with the buffalo, planting, weeding, harvesting, repairing the dikes, hauling, etc. Only uprooting the seedlings was exclusively men's work (even this was done by women elsewhere in Thailand [Kingshill 1960:73]).

Besides the work in rice-fields, women dug and cleaned

Seasonal Activities

128 A chart has been prepared to show the climatic conditions in Bang Chan and what people were doing at different seasons (Chart 1). For convenience, the periods covered by the four rounds of the dietary survey (p. 58) are included.

129 The year starts with May, the beginning of the rice-year. At this time the rains began to soften the parched ground, and the heat slackened. School re-opened. Farmers turned to plowing, harrowing, raising the seedlings. Both sexes worked about equally in field labor, boys from 14 and girls from about 13 years of age performing tasks according to skill and strength. Everyone was in the field at dawn. The buffalo, but not the farmer, rested through the noonday heat (about 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.) and also on the weekly holy day. Meals were usually eaten about 10 a.m. and after returning from the field at dark. Although two meals a day were usual at other times, at this season, some had a third meal about 2 p.m. If the buffalo were brought home to rest, this meal could be eaten at home, but hired laborers or those working far from home often took with them rice and other foods in a (2)pin-(1)toe, or tiered lunch kit.

130 With the rains, the canals had filled, so that by June buyers with big rice boats could return. The few farmers who could afford to hold onto a portion of their last year's crop sold it for a better price at this time. Vegetables and fruits which had died in the long drought were replaced, and trees were planted.

131 In July the heavy transplanting season began. Because of cooperative work habits or hiring out, people worked solidly day after day for two months on their own or on another's fields. It was dawn-to-dark, back-breaking work.

132 This was an anxious time. The seedlings had to go in at exactly the right time. Water level was only partly controllable. Lack of rain might be remedied by pumping water from the canals but flooding would drown the plants. School vacation was scheduled at this time so both teachers and children could help. Older children might work in the fields, while younger ones, from 8 to 13, and the aged took over the care of babies and toddlers, fished, cooked, gathered food for the family and grass for the buffalo. People knew the crop was subject to drought and flood, pests of rats and worms, destruction by birds or wandering buffalo or duck, and in the end to the mysterious fluctuations of the price of rice on the world market. Moreover, some persons worried about debts, acquired from giving a ceremony or making a capital investment and sometimes from heavy gambling during the rest season.

252 a woman's" (Sharp et al., 1953, p. 88). For instance, the
442 husband cooked when his wife was away from home, e.g. selling
in the market or in farm labor, and of course when she was
252 sick or resting after childbirth. The ability of boys as well
867 as girls to cook rice and some of the accompaniments was taken
for granted. A girl or boy could cook rice "as soon as he
could lift the rice pot," e.g. at 6 or so; by age 12 he could
cook a creditable meal. In mid-December, 1952, on the last
day of school before vacation, one of us saw committees of
school children (aged 7-14 years) preparing food for a special
meal, on the school grounds. The variety of dishes prepared
and the ease with which the children went about their tasks
gave evidence of the home experience these children had had
252 (Hauck, 1953). Responsibility for food preparation increased
with age up to about 15 years, after which all available able-
bodied family members did field work during the busy seasons
(cf. p. 11). Several hours per day were spent in cooking and
by middle age, parents were eager to turn this job over to a
daughter or daughter-in-law. If they had no daughter, this
was an explicit reason for adopting a baby girl.

Certain men of eminence, e.g. headmen and elders, would not be asked to cook at all, but as they aged, they might return to the task. One old headman, all of whose children had married and left home, said that he was doing the cooking for 2 months because his wife had back trouble. Some dishes were cooked by men only, even when their wives stood by: turtle, frog and cobra curries, for instance. These were also food for men only, suitable to serve at a drinking party.

A premium was put on good cooking, and certain women who were noted for their cooking were in great demand for large scale food preparation during the ceremonial season. One farmer planned to send his daughter to learn from such a skilled cook, having in mind the food preparation which would be needed when his sons were old enough to be ordained. Adverse comments might be made if the food did not come up to expectation; thus, a small boy complained that his curry was "too salty," and an old woman said loudly that the curry made by her 16-year old grand-daughter was "not good," although this girl was the only one at home to cook.

Meal Patterns[1] and Preparation of Typical Thai Dishes

252 Food was commonly prepared twice a day, in the morning
264 and late afternoon. The meal pattern was the same for breakfast

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118 1. Sivarnakich (1950) described the Thai diet in a
262 general way and Sharp et al., (1953, pp. 263-274) summarized the small amount of information on diet in Bang Chan obtained during the preliminary study in 1948-49.